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THE
KING of PRUSSIA's
CRITICISM
ON THE
HENRIAD

OF
Monsieur de VOLTAIRE.

Translated from the ORIGINAL.

WITH
A PREFACE,

Containing,

A SHORT ACCOUNT of the Disgrace
and Retreat of that Favourite.

LONDON:

Printed for JOHN RIVINGTON, at the *Bible and
Crown*, in *St. Paul's Church-Yard*.

M.DCC.LVIII.

[Price 6d.]

THE
KING of PRUSSIA'S
CRITICISM
ON THE
NEW RYAD



MAINTAINED

Translated from the Original.

WITH
A PREFACE

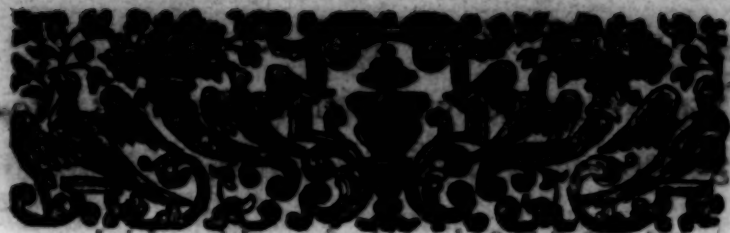
Containing

A Short Account of the Disposition
and Reason of that Favourite.

LONDON:

Printed by John Richardson, at the Press
in St. Paul's Church-yard.

1784



The subject here is something new.

The King of France has drawn the Eyes of

Two, perhaps the greatest Part of the

World, upon him. They view the Hero;

and the Philosopher the Philosopher.

And the Patriot of Learning and of Learning

Men, the Poets, the Poets, the Poets

P R E F A C E.



THE following Sheets are thrown
before the Public; and if they
serve no other End, they may at
least amuse. Every thing said,

or done, or wrote, by those who are distinguished among the Sons of Men, commands Attention. Great Characters excite the Curiosity of the Public; and that at least is gratified, by communicating any, even the most common, Occurrences in such Lives.

—As angry as *Scaliger* is, for my Part I am gratified when *Montaigne* tells me he loves white better than red Wine; when I hear that the Duke of *Argyl* had a natural Antipathy to a Rat; that *Addison* loved a Midnight Bottle; and that *Congreve* and old

B

Jacob

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Jacob used to warm their *Bunnions* * together.

The Subject here is something higher.—
The King of *Prussia* has drawn the Eyes of *Europe*, perhaps of the greater Part of the World, upon him. They view the Hero; I consider the Philosopher, the Man of Taste, the Patron of Learning and of learned Men, the Poets Friend, the general Patron of those who either can enlighten or charm Mankind. Science wants not his Support; the Muse is not forlorn.

But a Panegyric upon him is not designed. If the following Translation gives one, it is his own Work, not mine; and *his Works* should follow him. How far the Man of Genius, Learning, Taste, Judgment, will appear, is left to every discerning Reader. Let him coolly read, let him as coolly reflect, and then judge. It may perhaps appear, that the *Henriad* was not wrote in a finer Spirit, or in a Taste more elegant, than this short *Avant Propos*. Perhaps a Truth of Senti-

* A Cant-Word that *Jacob Tonson* had for his Corns.
ment,

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ment, a Beauty of Morals, a divine Enthusiasm, such as the Poet feels in the raptured Moment, was not wanting in the Critic. That he read with Judgment, that he relished with Taste, that he felt the *fine Fancy*, which *Shakespeare* tells us animates the Poet, and makes his Eye glance

From Heaven to Earth, from Earth to Heaven,

let every one, who has read *Homer*, *Milton*, or *Shakespeare*, say. The coolest Reader will see the Movements of his Mind, the Fire that enlightned his Judgment, and warmed his Heart.

Criticisms upon Criticisms, I am not fond of; and I cannot illustrate his Illustrations. Read with Attention, and they illustrate themselves.

The *Henriad* was published first in *London* in the Year 1723, under the Title of *A Poem on the League*. In the Year 1726 a Second Edition, more correct and beautiful, appeared under its present Title, adorned with Copper Plates. It was dedicated to the

Queen of *England*, in the following polite Address, and drawn up by *Monf. Voltaire* himself, in our Tongue.

“ *To the QUEEN.*

“ *Madam,*

“ **I** T was the Fate of *Henry* the IVth to
“ be protected by an *English* Queen:

“ He was assisted by that great *Elizabeth*,
“ who was in her Age the Glory of her
“ Sex. By whom can her Memory be so
“ well protected, as by her who resembles
“ her so much in her personal Virtues?

“ Your Majesty will find in this Book
“ bold impartial Truths; Morality unstained
“ with Superstition; a Spirit of Liberty,
“ equally abhorrent of Rebellion and Ty-
“ ranny; the Rights of Kings always as-
“ serted, and those of Mankind never laid
“ aside.

“ The same Spirit in which it was writ-
“ ten, gave me the Confidence to offer it
“ to the virtuous Consort of a King, who,
“ among so many crowned Heads, enjoys
“ almost alone the inestimable Honour of
“ ruling a free Nation: A King, who
“ makes

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" makes his Power consist in being be-
 " loved, and his Glory in being just.

" Our *Descartes*, who was one of the
 " greatest Philosophers in *Europe* before Sir
 " *Isaac Newton* appeared, dedicated his
 " *Principles* to the celebrated Princess *Pa-*
 " *latine Elizabeth*: Not, said he, because
 " she was a Princess; for true Philosophers
 " respect Princes, but never flatter them;
 " but because, of all his Readers, she under-
 " stood him the best, and loved Truth the
 " most.

" I beg Leave, Madam, without com-
 " paring myself to *Descartes*, to dedicate
 " the *Henriad* to Your Majesty upon the
 " like Account; not only as the Protectress
 " of all Arts and Sciences, but as the best
 " Judge of them.

" I am, with that profound Respect which
 " is due to the greatest Virtue, as well as the
 " highest Rank,

" *May it please Your Majesty,*

" Your MAJESTY'S

" *Most humble, most dutiful,*

" *most obliged Servant.*

" VOLTAIRE."

I could

I could not help transcribing the Whole. I look upon it to be one of the finest Dedications in any Language, equally worthy of the Author and his great Patroness; where he maintains the Dignity of the Philosopher and Poet, without being wanting in that Respect which is due to Greatness. *He can praise Kings, as Mons. Marmontel says, without flattering them.*

There is some Mistake in the Date, or the Dedication must be later than the Edition of 1726; perhaps added a Year or two after, when *George* the Second and his illustrious Consort had ascended the Throne.

In 1736 the Prince Royal of *Prussia* (now the King) gave Orders to Mr. *Algaroti*, who then resided in *London*, for a pompous Edition of the *Henriad*. It was to have been engraved, with Decorations to each Page. For this Edition the Royal Patron and Friend of the Arts had drawn up the following Preface. He was willing to leave a Monument of his Love for Letters in general, and of the *Henriad* in particular. But the Death of the King his Father, the Wars which succeeded,

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succeeded, the Departure of Mr. *Algaroti*, who left *London*, interrupted the Design, and this Edition came to nothing.

The last Editions of M. *Voltaire's* Works were in 1756; one at *Geneva*, and another at *Paris* the same Year. In these Editions this Address is given to the Public intire. A Fragment indeed had some time before come from Mr. *Marmontel*, in his Preface to the *Henriad*: Here you have it complete, as it came from the Pen of one of the most distinguished Men of this, or perhaps of any other Age. It may not only be considered as a valuable literary Curiosity, but as giving a public Example to the Great Ones of the Earth, not only to protect and reward the finer Arts and Sciences, but to encourage them by their Examples, and to advance them by their Works. This, as it is so uncommon among the Sons of Men, appears with more Dignity in so great a King.

Kings, indeed, have been Authors ere now; but how far the World has been obliged to them, I will not take upon me to say; or whether they have helped to polish
our

our Taste, to refine our Manners, or have advanced the Interests of Learning in any considerable Degree. No doubt their Writings were read and admired during their Lives. Courtiers would certainly admire; and in every Page some Beauties would be found, which could not so easily be discerned by common Understandings, or seen by other Eyes. Even our *James* the First had his Admirers, tho' nothing could equal the Weakness of his Pen, unless it was the Weakness of his Government. But Adulation dies, visionary Beauties wither at once, and real intrinsic Merit can only support a Work. If Genius is wanting, the Dignity of its Author cannot long support it; nor ought: For Kings, when they condescend to become Authors, are no longer Kings: They quit the Throne, and join in a Republic, where *Apollo* and the Muses, supported by Truth and Reason, preside, and only they.

But his *Prussian* Majesty, as he is the first of Kings, is also the first of Writers. His Pen becomes him as well as the Sword; and
he

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he can, like *Cæsar*, immortalize himself by either. Not content to be the greatest Warrior, he must also be the first of Writers, and takes the Lead in Genius, as he does in Power. There is a fine Compliment that *Voltaire* pays him, in a Letter dated at *Cyrey*, Decemb. 1741. With a Smile he tells the King, that *Milton* says,

“ *Amongst Unequals no Society.* ”

“ And therefore, what I fear is, that in
 “ time you will come to despise Mankind,
 “ Millions of unfeathered two-legged Be-
 “ ings, which throng the World, are so
 “ far below you, both by their Rank and
 “ Talents.”

The Intimacy betwixt him and *Voltaire* began about the Year 1736: He was then only the Prince Royal: He had read several of his Works; he was charmed with the Author; he was about giving a pompous Edition of the *Henriad*; he had wrote this Preface for it: But, not content, he must also patronize the Author. He even condescended to write to him. The Letter is

C

extant,

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extant, and does equal Honour to the Prince
and to the Poet.

—— “ I know,” says he, “ that the Faith
“ of Princes is a Jest in this our Day ; but
“ I hope you will except me from the ge-
“ neral Rule, I shall be richer in the Pos-
“ session of your Works, than in all the
“ fluctuating Goods of Fortune, which are
“ got and lost by the same Chance.” ——
And again : “ What is it we do not owe
“ to those whom Nature has happily di-
“ stinguished ? By Talents she bestows
“ upon her Favourites, the Arts and Sci-
“ ences are advanced ; but it is for Princes
“ to recompence their Cares. What Glory
“ should I acquire in crowning your Toils,”
&c. &c. &c.

The Number of Letters, which passed
betwixt him and *Voltaire*, shew the Inti-
macy in which they lived. He was esteem-
ed, honoured, enriched, by his great Patron ;
the Patron was instructed, was charmed, was
immortalized, by the Poet. All that awful
Distance, which Royalty requires, was dropt ;
they write as Friend to Friend ; they throw

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off, in Prose or Verse, the *Bagatelle* of the Moment; they are serious or gay, they trifle or philosophize, just as they please, as it suited their present Temper and Disposition. "Is it not true," says *Voltaire* in one of his Letters, "that one cannot avoid loving Men of superior Talents, when to these Talents is joined every Art to engage; and if it should unfortunately happen, that this Man is a King, should his State get the better, and impair his other Interests, — should one like him the worse for his Crown? For my Part, I honestly declare, your Sceptre does not make me love you a Jot the less." What a Proof is this of the Intimacy with which they wrote, the Intimacy with which they lived. *Horace* and *Mæcenas* never lived in more. This Friendship continued, with little or no Interruption, till the Year 1753, when it was finally dissolved, or in all Appearance it will be so in the Event.

Of the various Accounts which have got abroad of this unhappy Division, some are incredible, and others inconsistent. We must

wait till Anger cools, till Resentment abates, till Malice sickens, or till the Subjects themselves die: When Death has removed one, or both, Envy no longer shall remain; all Competition must be over: Then, perhaps, the Survivor may relate with more Impartiality, or some neutral Pen give the Account in a fair manner; allow Merit its full Weight, and soften its Failings; for, what Merit is without them!

Had *Voltaire* been less jealous of a Rival, he had perhaps never fallen; but he was too much so. *Maupertuis* was the Man; and that Jealousy carried him those Lengths which undid him. But he could not bear a Competitor in his Royal Patron; he could not bear to see any of the Sons of Science rising into Favour, without thinking himself in danger. It was weak; but great Minds are not exempt from Weakness. He endeavoured to crush this Rival, and perished in the Attempt. The King at first interposed betwixt them, and hoped to have brought about a Compromise: Nay, *Voltaire* promised to suppress his Resentments
and

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and his Satires; but he forgot himself, or took a Method of evading his Promise by a Publication at a Distance. This was discovered, this was resented, by the King; *but still, like himself, within just Bounds.* Voltaire, in a Pique, hastily desired Leave to withdraw: Leave was granted; he accordingly withdrew; but, on retiring, had a new Disgrace thrown upon him, thro' perhaps his own Carelessness: He was arrested at *Frankfort*; but he no sooner restored the Copy of the King's Works*, than he was left at Liberty to withdraw, and settle where he pleased. Disgusted with Kings, hating Courts, chagrined with disappointed Hope, and deprived of the Friendship of his Royal Master, he withdrew to the Foot of the *Alps*, there to enjoy the Liberty he loved. He sought Protection, and found it, in a Government where there are no Kings to flatter, or Courts to betray; and where, under a mild Republic, and the just Protection of

* Voltaire had a Copy of the King of Prussia's Works, which he ought to have restored on leaving the Kingdom. This he had omitted; and this was supposed to be the Occasion of his Arrest at *Frankfort*.

equal Laws, he can gently descend the Vale of Life, and spend his few remaining Days, like a Veteran Poet, in Chearfulness, Freedom, Independency, and a Song.

I cannot close without giving One Quotation from his *Essay on Man*, a beautiful moral Poem, in Seven short Books. This Passage is in the Fourth, on *Moderation* in our Pursuits either of Knowledge, Pleasure, or Ambition. He toucheth with Delicacy on his Rupture with the King of *Prussia*, and laments his Mistake in believing *Kings were capable of Friendship*. His Numbers are harmonious; and, to do him Justice, the Satire is couched without Harshness or Acrimony.

*J'ai vécu, je l'avoue, avec des Souverains :
Mon Vaisseau fit Naufrage aux Mers de ces Syrènes ;
Leur voix flatta mes Sens ; ma main porta leur
Chaines.*

*On me dit, je vous aime, Et je crus comme un Sot,
Qu'il étoit quelque Idée attachée à ce mot.
J'y fus pris : J'asservis au vain Desir de plaire,
La male Liberté qui fait mon Caractère ;*

Et,

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*Et, perdant la Raison dont je devois m'armer,
 J'allai m'imaginer qu'un Roi pouvoit aimer.
 Que je suis revenu de cette Erreur grossiere !
 A peine de la Cour, j'entrai dans la Carrière,
 Que mon ame éclairée, ouverte au Repentir,
 N'eut autre ambition, que d'en pouvoir sortir.
 Raisonneurs beaux Esprits, Et vous qui croiez
 l'être,
 Voulez vous vivre heureux ? vivez toujours sans
 Maître.*

With Kings I have sojourn'd : I blush to own it.
 The Syrens lur'd me to their dangerous Shore ;
 And there my hapless Vessel struck, and found-
 der'd :
 They won mine Ear, and hugg'd me into Chains.
 Fondly I thought their Promises were sacred ;
 And when they said they lov'd, they meant the
 fame.
 But now I see my Error——Yet it took,
 And snar'd my Liberty.——The manly Sense
 Of Freedom, and glorious Independency, gave
 way :
 I stoop'd to fawn, I hop'd to please — Vain Ef-
 fort !
 Friendship is not for Kings.—— And yet,
 Against

Against my Judgment, once I thought it was
 But now my Dream is o'er.
 Ere I had well begun to breathe the Air
 Of Courts, etc. well I'd cross'd the slipp'ry

Threshold,
 My Heart misgave; I wish'd myself away,
 And panted to retreat.

Philosophers, and you who study Life,
 Would you be happy, aim at Independency,
 And walk the Track of Time without a Master.





A
Preliminary DISCOURSE

TO

The *HENRIAD* of Monsieur
De VOLTAIRE.

*Written by one of the greatest Patrons of
Learning in the present Age, and of which
the World never saw but only a Fragment
quoted in the Preface of M. Marmontel.*



THE Poem of the *Henriad* is
known throughout *Europe*. Nu-
merous Editions have been
spread in every Nation, who
are polished enough to have
any Taste for Letters.

Mr. *Voltaire* surely is the only Author,
who prefers the Perfection of his Art to his

D

Ease

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Ease and Interest; and has been indefatigable in correcting, even from the very first Edition, when this Poem appeared under the Title of *A Poem on the League*. In the present, the Author has made repeated Efforts to polish his Work, and bring it to that Point of Perfection, which Men of leading Genius, and Masters of the Art, rather conceive in Idea, than carry into Execution.

The present Edition, which is offered to the Public, is considerably enlarged by the Author; an incontestible Proof, that his fertile Genius is an inexhaustible Source of Beauties, of Beauties for ever new and perfect: Which may be well expected from a Pen so excellent as *Monf. de Voltaire's*.

The Difficulties which this Prince of *French* Poetry had to surmount, when he wrote this Poem, are innumerable: He had not only the Prejudices of all *Europe*, but even of his own Countrymen, against him; who were of Opinion, that an Epic Poem would never succeed in the *French* Language. He had before his Eyes the sad Examples of his Predecessors, who had fallen

len in the painful Career: He had also to combat the superstitious Reverence which *Virgil* and *Homer* had obtained even among the wisest. To this may be added, a Constitution too delicate, and an infirm State of Health, which would have prevented any other Man, less sensible than him of the Glory of his Country, from attempting so arduous a Work: Nevertheless, Mr. *Voltaire* has triumphed over all these Difficulties, and has completely executed his Design, tho' at the Expence of his Fortune, and often of his Repose.

A Genius so enlarged, a Soul so sublime, joined to his indefatigable Industry, would have opened a Way to the most illustrious Employments, had he quitted his proper Sphere, that of the Sciences, which he cultivated, to devote himself to the Pursuits of Interest and Ambition; — Pursuits, which Mankind only consider as solid. But he chose to follow the Bent of his Genius, and a powerful Impulse for the Arts and Sciences, rather than those Advantages which Fortune might have given him. He, it must be allowed, has succeeded perfectly well in his Aim: He does as much Honour to the

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Sciences, as they to him. In the *Henriad* the Poet only appears; but he is equally the profound Philosopher and wise Historian.

The Arts and Sciences are a vast extended Kingdom, which it is almost impossible wholly to subdue: A *Cæsar*, an *Alexander*, could only conquer the World. It requires great Talents and Resolution to gain a small Tract; and the most of Men make irregular Marches in their Attacks on this *Parnassian* Country. Besides, there are in the Sciences, as in Empires, Regions which are divided into Numbers of petty Sovereignities: These united form what they call Academies. And as in Aristocratical Governments one often finds Men born with superior Powers, whose Genius is raised above others; so an enlightened Age has produced Men Prodigies of intellectual Greatness, who have monopolized the Knowledge which would have enriched Numbers. Such was *Leibnitz*, such *Fontinelle*, in their Day; such is *Voltaire* at present. There is not one Science, which his Activity does not compass, from the most abstruse Geometry, to the Sublime in Poetry; all submit to the Powers of his Mind.

Not-

Notwithstanding the Number of Sciences which employ *Voltaire*, notwithstanding his Infirmities, notwithstanding the Vexation and Indignities of Envy, he has carried his *Henriad* to a Perfection, which no other Poem ever arrived at.

One finds all imaginable Judgment in the Conduct of his Poem: He has even made his Use of the very Faults which are charged upon *Homer*: The Actions of the several Books of the *Iliad* have little or no Connection one with another: They even deserve the Name of Rhapsodies. In the *Henriad* one finds an intimate Connection thro' every Book: 'Tis only the same Subject, divided by the very Order of Time into Ten principal Actions. The unravelling of the Poem is natural, viz. the Conversion of *Henry IV.* and his Entry into his Capital; which put an End to the Civil Wars and the League, which troubled all *France*. In that our Poet is infinitely superior to *Virgil*, who finished his *Æneid* in a less interesting manner than he began it: One sees only the Sparks of that Flame, which dazzled the Reader in the Beginning of his Poem. It is said indeed, that *Virgil* wrote

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wrote his first Books in the Flower of his Youth, the last Part of his divine Poem in that Period of Life, when Imagination droops her Wing, and the animating Fire is half extinguished; when it is not permitted to the Warrior to be any more the Hero, nor the Poet to write.

If *Voltaire* imitates *Virgil* or *Homer* in some Places, the Imitation is always a sort of Original, in which one sees the Judgment of the *French* Poet superior to the *Grecian*. Compare the Descent of *Ulysses* into Hell with the Seventh Canto of the *Henriad*, and you will find this last enriched with an infinite Number of Beauties, which *Voltaire* owes to none but himself.

The single Stroke of introducing, by way of Dream, whatever his Hero saw in Heaven, in Hell, whatever was foretold to him at the Temple of *Destiny*, is worth all the *Iliad*; for this Dream reduces every thing that befalls his Hero to the Rules of Probability; whilst, on the other hand, the Descent of *Ulysses* into Hell loses every Charm, which an Air of Truth would give to the ingenious Fictions of *Homer*.

To

To the rest we may add, that all the *Episodes* in the *Henriad* are thrown into their proper Places: Art is so well concealed by the Author, that it is difficult to perceive it; all appears natural; and one would say, that the Fruits his fertile Imagination has produced, and which adorn every Part of his Poem, are *spontaneous*. You do not find little trifling Details, where so many Authors lose themselves, and where the dry or the turgid are the sad Substitutes of Genius. Mr. *Voltaire*, in the Pathetic, writes with Tenderness: He knows how to reach the Heart: Such are these affecting Passages — The Death of *Coligni*, the Murder of *Valois*, the Combat of young *Dailly*, the Parting of *Henry IV.* and the beautiful *Gabriel D'Estree*, the Death of the brave *Aumale*. Every time one reads, as often is the Heart affected; the involuntary Sigh rises, the Tear falls. — In a Word, the Author stops only where the Subject is interesting: He transiently passeth over those Parts which only swell his Poem: There is neither too much nor too little in the *Henriad*.

The Marvellous in this Author cannot offend the most delicate Reader: Every thing is made probable, according to the System
of

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of their Religion. Such Powers have Eloquence and Poetry, they possess even the Art to make those Things venerable, which are not so in themselves, and to furnish Proofs of Credibility almost capable of seducing *.

All the Allegories one finds in this Poem are new. Policy inhabits the *Vatican*—the Temple of Love—True Religion—Virtue—Discord—Vice—are all animated by the Pencil of *Monf. Voltaire*: They are a Sort of Pictures, which surpass, in the Judgment of Connoisseurs, all that the skilful Hands of *Carrachio* or *Poussin* ever finished.

It remains that I speak of the Harmony of his Numbers. Here the Poet properly appears: Never had the *French* Tongue so much Energy, as in the *Henriad*: One finds a Majesty throughout: The Author rises with infinite Fire into the Sublime; and he never falls, but with Grace and Dignity. What Life in his Pictures! what Strength in his Characters and Descriptions! what Grandeur in his Details! The Combat of young *Turenne* should be ever admired by

* This refers to the Doctrine of the Real Presence, which *Voltaire* introduces in the Close of his last Book.

the Henriad of Voltaire. 25

his Readers: In this Piece the Combatants give, receive, ward, and return the Blow. *Voltaire* here has principally found the Difficulties arising from the Genius of his Language: Nevertheless, he has extricated himself with all possible Glory: The Reader is transported into the Field of Battle: You rather see the Combat than read the Description.

As to the Moral, and Beauty of Sentiment, you find here every thing which can be desired: The prudent Courage of *Henry IV*, joined to his Humanity and Generosity, ought to serve as an Example to all Kings and Conquerors; who sometimes indeed value themselves, but improperly, on treating with Severity, not to say worse, those whom the Fortune of War, or the Fall of Empires, have put into their Power. Let them be told, as they walk through Life, that true Greatness does not consist in unrelenting Tyranny, but rather in those Sentiments which the Author has expressed with so much Dignity.

*Amitié, don du Ciel, plaisirs des grandes
Ames,*

E

Amitié

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*Amitié, que les Rois, ces illustres ingrats,
Sont assez Malheureux pour ne connoître pas.*

Friendship! Heaven's choicest Gift,
True Source of human Happiness, Life's
Cordial,
The noble Soul's Delight!
Scepter'd Kings, illustrious Wretches! never
feel thy Pow'r,
Nor own thy sacred Tie — Royalty is but
A sad Equivalent for Loss of Friendship.

The Character of *Philip of Mornay* ought to be considered as a capital one in the *Henriad*: It is perfectly new: A philosophical Warrior, the humane Soldier; a Courtier, and yet uncorrupted; faithful, without Adulation. Such a Blaze of Virtue ought to conciliate our Affections. As the Author has finished it, *it is a Source of the richest Sentiments*. How am I pleased to see *Philip of Mornay*, this faithful Friend and Stoic, by the Side of his young and valiant Master, repulsing Death, but never giving the fatal Blow: His Wisdom and Philosophy is far removed from the Manners of the Age; and it is really to be lamented, for the Good of Mankind, that a Character so beautiful is only

only the Child of Reason, and a Creature of Fancy.

On the other hand, the *Henriad* breathes nothing but Humanity: This Virtue, so necessary to Princes, or rather their *only* one, is set in the most striking Light: He shews a King victorious; but conquering only to forgive. He brings his Hero in Arms to the Walls of *Paris*: Instead of plundering the rebellious City, he furnishes the wretched Inhabitants with the Necessaries of Life, amidst the Horrors of a most dreadful Famine. But on the other hand he paints, in the most lively Colours, the shocking Massacre of *St. Bartholomew*, and the unheard-of Cruelty of *Charles* the IXth, who himself added to its Horrors, by precipitating, with his own Hands, the Fate of his unhappy Calvinist Subjects.

The gloomy Politics of *Philip* the II^d, the Intrigues and Cunning of *Sextus* the Vth, the Indolence of *Valois*, the Weakness which Love threw into the Government of *Henry* the IVth, are nicely balanced by our Author. *Monf. Voltaire* makes those Reflections here, which are truly excellent, which

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have a Tendency to form the Manners of our Youth, and to give them true Notions of Right and Wrong, of Virtue and Vice. One finds, throughout this Poem, the Author recommending Two Points, Reverence to the Laws, and Fidelity to Sovereigns. He has immortalized *Harlai*, whose inviolable Fidelity to his Master well deserves the Recompence. He has done the same Justice to the Counsellors *Brisson*, *L'Archet*, *Tardif*, who were put to Death by the League. The following beautiful Reflection was made on this Occasion :

*Vous Noms toujours fameux vivront dans la
Memoire,
Et qui meurt pour son Roi, meurt toujours
avec Gloire.*

Immortal Heroes, whose illustrious Names
All future Times shall rev'rence —
When our King or Country call upon us,
Then to resign our Breath, like you, 'tis
glorious.

Poitier's Address to the Faction is equally to be admired for the Eloquence, and Truth of Sentiment. The Author brings him into the Assembly of the League: He bravely
opposes

opposes their rebellious Views of electing a King from among themselves: He brings them to the just Government of their Sovereign they would have renounced: He condemns all the Bravery of the *Guises*, as only a military Virtue, and becoming criminal from the very Moment it was exerted against their King and Coutry. But whatever I can say cannot point out the Beauties of this Poem: Read it with Attention: I only attempt to hint a few Beauties to those who possibly might have overlooked them.

I pass over the religious War, on which the Poem is founded: The Author naturally exposes the Abuses of Religion; Abuses, which Fanaticism and Superstition ever make. I know not by what Fatality it comes, but it has always been observed, that these Wars, which Religion kindles, have always been more bloody than those which take their Rise either from Ambition in Princes, or Rebellion in Subjects: And as Fanaticism and Superstition have, in all Ages, been the usual Refuge of Priests and Princes, in their hateful Pursuits of Ambition and Policy, *Voltaire* thought it necessary to throw up a
Bank

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Bank to stem their Fury. Here he has employed all the Fire of his Imagination ; here he has exerted every Power of Eloquence, every Charm of Poetry ; to place in the most striking Light, before the Eyes of the present Age, the Follies of their Fathers ; to guard them against falling into the same. The Subtilties of scholastic Debates he would drive from the Camp and the Army, to the Cloisters of solemn Pedants : He would for ever disarm the religious Assassin, and wrench the Dagger from his Hand, which he snatches from the Altar, and with which he strikes his Brethren without Pity or Remorse. In one Word, the great End he had in view, throughout his whole Work, was the Good and Happiness of Mankind. Hence it comes, that the Author so often warns the World to shun the dangerous Shelves of Faticism and false Zeal.

Indeed it appears, and happy for Men it is so, that religious Wars are now no more. There is one Folly less in the World : But I will venture to say, that they owe this, in a great measure, to the Spirit of Freedom and Philosophy, which have diffused themselves throughout *Europe* : The more enlightened

lightened an Age, the less superstitious. The Times of *Henry* the IVth were vastly different: Monkish Ignorance and Superstition were carried to incredible Lengths among the Priests: And for others, such was the barbarous Turn of the Age, that Festivity and the Chace ingrossed their Attention; and the most palpable Errors found easy Admittance. *Mary of Medicis*, and the factious Nobility, might sooner impose on the Credulity of the People, because they were ignorant, blind, and rude.

Polite Ages of the World, where the Arts and Sciences flourished, never have furnished one Instance of a religious War, or even a seditious one. In the glorious Times of the *Roman* Empire (I mean about the latter End of *Augustus's* Reign) the Whole of it, which then was Two-thirds of the World, enjoyed a profound Peace: Men left the Interests of Religion to those whose Business it was to take care of them: They justly preferred Pleasure, Study, Repose, to that cruel Ambition and Rage, which made them cut one another's Throats on a Dispute of a Word, or from Motives of Interest, or fatal Glory.

The

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The Age of *Lewis XIV*, which, without Flattery, equalled that of *Augustus*, furnishes an Example of a peaceful and happy Reign, as to the Interior of the Kingdom; but which unhappily was disturbed towards the Close of it, by the Influence which Father *Tellier*, his Confessor, had over the Mind of the King, which then began to droop: But that is not properly the Fault of the Age, but the Individual. It cannot be denied, without manifest Injustice, that this Age produced Numbers of great Men.

The Sciences have always contributed to civilize the World, and to soften the Heart of Man: They make us more gentle, more just, less violent: They at least contribute, as much as the Laws, to the public Weal, and the Good of Society. This Train of Thinking is insensibly communicated from a Lover of the Arts to the Vulgar and the Public. From the Court it spreads to the City, and from thence to the Provinces. We see then, on the clearest Evidence, that Man is not born for himself alone; that Nature has not formed him to immure himself from the World; but to be useful in it: We should be mutually helpful to one another
under

under our common Wants and Necessities. Infirmities, Wretchedness, and Death, continually beset us, and chase us thro' Life to the Grave: It is therefore Folly to multiply the Causes of our Misery and Ruin. We acknowledge that Nature has made us equal, tho' we assert the various Subordinations in human Life: And hence we see the Necessity of living in Unity and Peace, of whatever Nation, of whatever Opinion, we happen to be: Friendship and Compassion are universal Duties, and take in the whole human Kind. In a Word, Study and Reflection correct even most of our constitutional Failings.

Such is the true Use of the Sciences; and hence we see the Obligation we are under to those who cultivate them, who endeavour to bring them into Repute, and fix their Value amongst us. *Monf. Voltaire*, who takes in the whole Circle, has always, in my Esteem, deserved the Gratitude of the Public; and the rather, as his Life and Labours are devoted to the Good of human Nature in general. This, together with a Desire I have ever had of doing Justice to Truth, determined me to procure this Edition for the

F Public;

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Public; which is made as worthy as possible both of *Mont. Voltaire* and his Readers.

In a Word, methinks it is a Compliment to the present Age, who certainly receive Honour by conferring it on so admirable an Author. Let us hand it to Posterity, and they down from Age to Age, That if we have produced great Men, we have known how to value them; and that neither Malice nor Envy could crush the Man, whose superior Merit and Talents distinguished him from the Vulgar, nay even amongst great Men.

F. I. N. I. S.

